The Angel resident

March 2015

Broadchurch's Tanya Franks on keeping a secret

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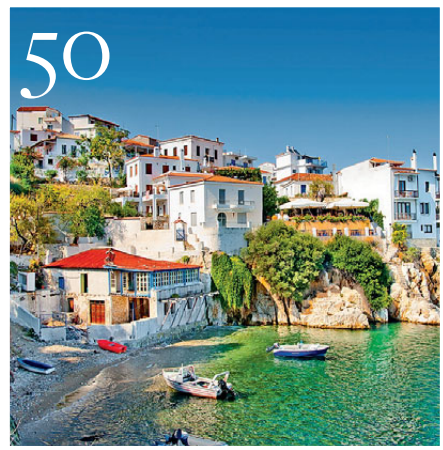

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COVER IMAGE:
LEE BROOM, SHOT EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE ANGEL RESIDENT BY ANTON AT ELECTRA HOUSE

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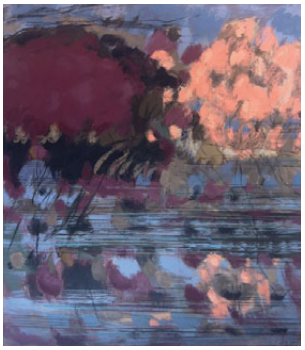
Highgate Contemporary Art

www.highgateart.com

We are delighted to announce the following two exhibitions. You can find us in the heart of Highgate Village showing a wide variety of art and ceramics. If you would like invitations to any of the private views, please email the gallery. We look forward to seeing you.



4 - 22 March
Richard Robbins Hon. RBA
(1927-2009)

4 - 22 March
Janey Sharratt

4 - 22 March
Elaine Fine

Boo Mallinson

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Etsuko Montgomery
Mark Ponsford
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Tuesday - Saturday 10.30am - 6pm. Or by appointment

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Total Average
Net Circulation
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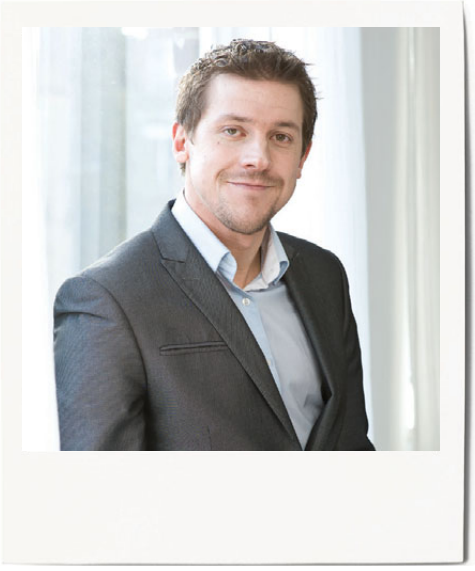
Distributed in Islington, Angel, Canonbury, Barnsbury and Highbury Park

Letter from the EDITOR



What makes someone great at what they do? If the answer was simple then we would all be billionaires and living the high life. Hard work, passion, and a thirst for knowledge all must play a role – but you also just need to have a little something about you that elevates you a little higher above your peers.

We try to find out what makes the greats tick this month with a special 'masters of craft' section, looking at two people at very different stages of their careers. Even before I took a real interest in design I knew who Zaha Hadid was. Based in Clerkenwell, she has been the architectural brains behind some of the most intriguing buildings around the world, but what makes her tick? Then we have our cover star, Lee Broom, who joins a very exclusive list (that includes Benedict Cumberbatch) of gracing the front of your magazine for a second time. Whether it's doing new things with marble, or revamping a Soho bar to resemble a living room, he lets us into his design mind.

Tanya Franks, however, was not so forthcoming with information, but through no fault of her own. After all, she is currently starring in two of the most talked about TV events of the moment – *Broadchurch* and 'who killed Lucy Beale?' in *EastEnders* – and she won't be giving the game away just yet. However, she did have plenty to say on what she loves about Islington and how the real Tanya Franks is a world away from what you see on screen.

Another master of his craft, Vivek Singh is arguably the most well-known Indian chef working in London today. The man behind three restaurants in the capital, he has a real hunger to keep evolving and offering something different. That's why, in March, you can expect to see businessmen and women walking around the City covered in multi-coloured powder. Everything is explained on page 38. From the hottest kitchen trends to a new 'one to watch' feature, via the personal trainers who have lead the way for a decade and the Islington milliner who has won over Disney, there's plenty to enjoy this month. We may not have the master key to unlocking success, but there's certainly plenty of inspiration all around us.

Mark Kebble, Editor

the big interview

SECRET'S OUT

It's must be quite something to be a part of TV history, but what about twice over? Tanya Franks let's the cat out of the bag

Words MARK KEBBLE

Looking at the types of character Tanya Franks has portrayed on screen – drug addict, alcoholic, prostitute – it's rather surprising to meet the real person. 'I'm not a very daring person,' she insists with a laugh. 'I tend to shorten the sub-route in life. Things like debt really frighten me, being drunk frightens me, something like absolutely frightens me. I'm not a big risk taker in that way. I like to play someone who I can learn something from, in a situation that I wouldn't be in, in a life different from what I am used to in my life.'

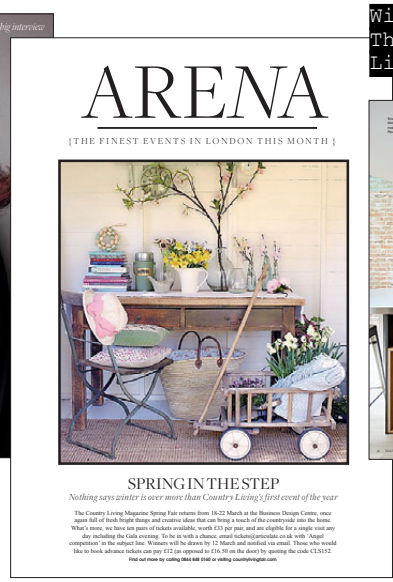
She has chosen well. Having created a career both here and in the US, Tanya landed key support roles in two of the most talked about TV events of recent times: Jonathan Brett in *EastEnders* and Lucy Stevens in *Broadchurch*. But more about those later as we are talking the day after press night for Contact *coze*, the new play at the Park Theatre in which Tanya takes to the stage alongside fellow *EastEnders*' alumni Charlie Brooks (Vi's Sonny, Vicky and, once again, for from the real Tanya Franks.

'It's about two couples that make an arrangement on an internet dating site to meet and stay together,' she explains. 'What I think about it is the fact it's a really fun piece and chunky, but it also has a real element of drama in there with twists and turns. It's a scenario that I wouldn't imagine jumping into in my own life!'

The theatre, however, is something that Tanya feels far more comfortable with. 'I did 14 years in theatre before I went into TV,' she says. 'I try to combine the two, with bits of film thrown in, as well as lots of radio. I try to keep the stickiness of mediums because they all require different approaches to start. I love theatre, but I also like being in front of a camera too. I wouldn't want to choose one over the other.'

Residing in Highbury, did she feel her part of North London needed something like the Park Theatre? 'I think it's great that the Islington of today's late twenties/ thirties and a lot of culture in it. There's another theatre that has opened above the Hope & Anchor, but once you get to Finsbury Park it becomes a little quieter. It's a perfect location. Red Bend [the man behind Park Theatre and its Artistic Director] is doing a brilliant job there – it's only been open for 20 months or so, but it has managed to really build a reputation almost overnight. There are great actors going in there, playing to packed houses, and they are doing really amazing plays.'

Tanya Franks enjoys exploring the darker side of life on screen, but off it all she needs is a dose of Paul A. Young



ARENA

{THE FINEST EVENTS IN LONDON THIS MONTH}

SPRING IN THE STEP

Nothing says winter is over more than Country Living's first event of the year

The Country Living Magazine Spring Fair returns from 18-22 March at the Business Design Centre, once again full of fresh bright things and creative ideas that can bring a touch of the countryside into the home. What's more, we have ten pairs of tickets available, worth £33 per pair, and are eligible for a single visit any day including the Gala evening. To be in with a chance, email tickets@articulate.co.uk with 'Angel competition' in the subject line. Winners will be drawn by 12 March and notified via email. Those who would like to book advance tickets can pay £12 (as opposed to £16.50 on the door) by quoting the code CLS152.

Find out more by calling 0844 848 0140 or visiting countrylivingfair.com

Winter is officially over! That's because the Country Living Spring Fair is back

homes

THE TIMELESS EFFECT

Plan your kitchen carefully and it could last you a decade

Words KARA O'REILLY

What's hot in kitchens now, but also the looks that are timeless... Kara O'Reilly presents four pages of inspiration

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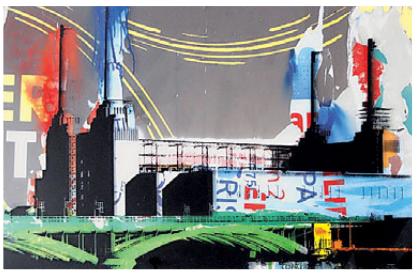
Find out more by calling 0844 848 0160 or visiting countrylivingfair.com

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

This spring the V&A will present the only major retrospective in Europe of the work of the visionary fashion designer Lee Alexander McQueen. Savage Beauty, opening on 14 March, will feature a wide range of his designs, including some early rare pieces. See more at vam.ac.uk

Philip Treacy for Alexander McQueen, La Dame Bleu, S/S 2008

Outline Editions, Kristjana S.Williams



Envie d'Art, Florent Touchot, Battersea Power Station Grey

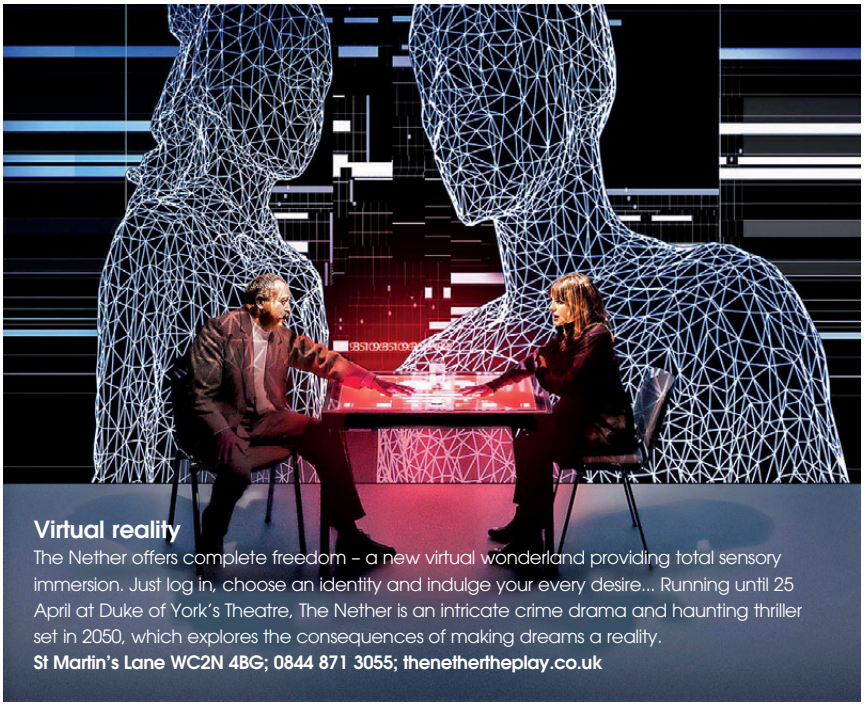
FAIR GAME

The Affordable Art Fair returns to where it all started at Battersea Park from 12-15 March, featuring an extensive selection of paintings, original artist-made prints, sculpture and photography on sale from £100-£5,000. Those new to art buying can be introduced to the UK's 'friendliest fair' with guided tours, education centres and workshops.
Discover more at affordableartfair.com/battersea

OBSESSIVE TENDENCIES

Magnificent Obsessions: The Artist as Collector, running until 25 May at the Barbican Centre, is the first major exhibition in the UK to present the fascinating personal collections of post-war and contemporary artists, including Peter Blake, Edmund de Waal, Damien Hirst and Andy Warhol.
Silk Street EC2Y 8DS; 020 7638 8891; barbican.org.uk

Damien Hirst, Murderme collection



Virtual reality

The Nether offers complete freedom – a new virtual wonderland providing total sensory immersion. Just log in, choose an identity and indulge your every desire... Running until 25 April at Duke of York's Theatre, The Nether is an intricate crime drama and haunting thriller set in 2050, which explores the consequences of making dreams a reality.
St Martin's Lane WC2N 4BG; 0844 871 3055; thenethertheplay.co.uk

DOGS OF WAR

Between 1966 and 2006, Libby Hall collected old photographs of dogs, acquiring thousands of images to assemble what is possibly the largest number of canine pictures ever gathered by one person. At the Bishopsgate Institute, from 10 March, she has selected her favourite images to reveal the unique bond between man and dog in a special First World War exhibition.
See more at bishopsgate.org.uk

KEEP THE FAITH

On the back of her recent Brit Award nomination, Paloma Faith heads to The O2 on 25 March. For tickets, visit theo2.co.uk

Online
For more March events not to miss visit theresident.co.uk

Language of dance

York Dance Project continues its relationship with Robert Cohan CBE, one of the giants of modern dance, who this year celebrates his 90th birthday. The company's spring programme includes the world premiere of Cohan's Lingua Franca, his first new work in a decade, and heads to Sadler's Wells on 10 March.
Rosebery Avenue EC1R 4TN; 0844 412 4300; sadlerswells.com

PICTURES: JOHAN PERSSON, PARI NADERI

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ROSIE MILLARD

I've been drinking coffee – lots of it – in the name of research...

You are at a dinner party in Notting Hill. Someone asks you where you live. 'Islington,' you say. There is, you must admit, a smidgen of pride in your reply. Because (in your mind) Islington is not only far nicer than Notting Hill, but it is still a place to reckon with, the jaunty younger sibling to dull old Hampstead, self-regarding Highgate, or matronly Wimbledon. It is left of centre, wildly independent, out there. 'Oh,' says the person you are trying to impress. 'Islington. All full of coffee chains these days. Same old same old.' You bite your lip. Really? Has your favourite London village become like everywhere else?

You close your eyes and all you can see is the Starbucks emblem rising out of Upper Street, like an unwelcome guest at a previously bohemian feast. Here, dear reader, is where this column will help you. For I have done the legwork. How come? Well, it's because I is a freelance hack, innit. I have all the time in the world to wander around coffee shops, trying them out just for you. This is the official list, in no particular order, of the best independent coffee shops in Islington.

Kipferl on Camden Passage. The name means croissant in Austrian, don't you know

CoffeeWorks, Camden Passage
Utterly delicious coffee thanks to an amazing coffee machine unknown outside Seattle. The shop is built on about five different levels, most of which come at you with no warning and no handrails. Hopefully you won't break an ankle when going to the ladies.

Kipferl, Camden Passage
The name is Austrian for croissant, apparently, and the café could have been airlifted out of Vienna. Coffee strength is selected by a colour chart and is all heavenly. Sachertorte, Apfel strudel and delicious sausage studded with cheese are always on the menu as optional, calorie loaded extras. Free copies of Die Welt hang nonchalantly from the walls.

Angel Delicatessen
Piero Maurizio runs this little delicatessen on Cross Street with classic Italian panache and style. A macchiato with a little custard tart is a wondrous thing on a Saturday morning in Islington, and here is where you will find it. Best coffee in Islington.

Sunday, Hemingford Road
I've gone on about this place before, but it still is up there with its array of delicious coffee, mint-infused water, banana bread – you name it, breakfast is just a pleasure there. Lunch and dinner aren't bad either, but I think as a breakfast/brunch place, Sunday is not to be beaten.

Sunflower Bakery, Caledonian Road
Again another favourite of mine. Delicious bread (obviously), world famous sourdough and a good selection of patisserie. Here is where you can get a cheap, lovely lunch. It doesn't disappoint in the coffee stakes either.

The other exciting thing about the above list is that you can take your dog into all of them. Which makes walking the mutt a bit less tiresome, particularly in March. Happy coffee drinking!

ROSIE'S MONTH

After a wonderful night at the Almeida, where we saw 'Emperor' Ian McDiarmid in the title role of The Merchant of Venice, we went to Islington institution Le Mercury for the first time. What a revelation! You want 60s French food? You'll find it here.

FRESH FACE

From reaching the semi-finals of Masterchef to joining the Gordon Ramsay family, there's plenty for chef Kim Woodward to chew on

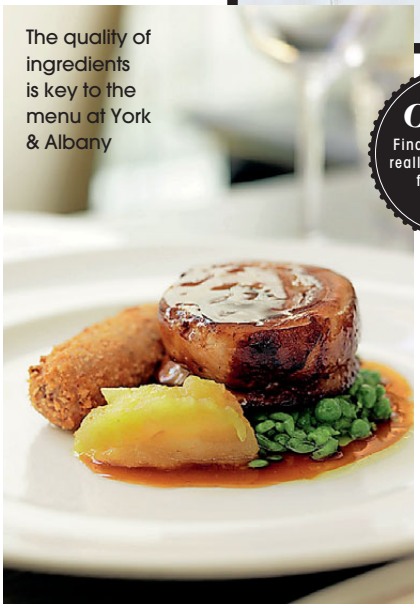
Words MARK KEBBLE

Kim Woodward has overseen the menu at the York & Albany for two and a half years now

Masterchef is undoubtedly popular – the TV show is replicated the world over – but watching the edited together highlights as chefs toil in the kitchen, there's always a nagging feeling if it's really as pressurised as it seems. 'When you only have one hour to cook a meal that can make or break you, it's all just a huge rush of adrenaline,' Kim Woodward insists. 'Cooking for the critics was incredible. Michel Roux Jr said one of my desserts was faultless – it's not everyday you get the chance to hear that!'

It's apparent when speaking to the York & Albany's Head Chef that she's game for a challenge. Masterchef happened four years after she joined the Gordon Ramsay Group as a Junior Sous Chef at Boxwood, which in turn came after an internship and six years in America. It's been two and a half years since she joined Camden's York & Albany, which is where her stock has truly risen. Regardless of it being in the news recently for legal reasons, the food offering remains exemplary.

'The most important thing for me is the quality of the ingredients and how they are handled,' Kim says on her ethos. 'Food sometimes just needs to be left alone, cooked and served simply to bring out its best qualities. Other times, there are brilliant opportunities to play with ingredients, ensuring the optimum marriage of flavours – but it's about understanding that so you don't overcomplicate things.'



The quality of ingredients is key to the menu at York & Albany

When you only have one hour to cook a meal, it's all just a huge rush of adrenaline

It was around a year ago that I visited the York & Albany and had a five-star experience, but given Kim's approach to the menus, a return is in order. 'I like to keep it fresh,' she states. 'Sometimes I change the menus every two to three months, other times it's more frequent. The lunch menu changes nearly every month. I like things to remain interesting regular customers. It's also a great way to keep my team on their toes and let them feel the changes in menus and new foods.'

Online
Find out what it's really like to work for Gordon Ramsay

A North Londoner herself, Kim has gone some way to putting this area on the foodie map – but in her opinion it's not enough. 'I am a firm believer that North London should be more of a focus for great food,' she says. 'If you look hard enough you'll find some hidden gems, it's really an undiscovered hotspot, but there's not enough people talking about it right now. I want that to change.'

With ambitions to own a seafood restaurant one day, perhaps Kim will continue to do her bit in rectifying this. And will we see her back on TV again, perhaps in a presenting role? 'Well I love a challenge, so I would never say no!'

York & Albany, 127-129 Parkway NW1 7PS; 020 7592 1227; gordonramsaygroup.com

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SECRET'S OUT

It's must be quite something to be a part of TV history, but what about twice over? Tanya Franks lets the cat out of the bag

Words MARK KEBBLE

Looking at the types of character Tanya Franks has portrayed on screen – drug addict, alcoholic, prostitute – it's rather surprising to meet the real person. 'I'm not a very daring person,' she insists with a laugh. 'I tend to choose the safe route in life. Things like debt really frighten me, being drunk frightens me, something like abseiling frightens me. I'm not a big risk taker in that way. I like to play someone who I can learn something from, in a situation or environment that's very different from what I am used to in my life.'

She has chosen well. Having created a career both here and in the US, Tanya landed key support roles in two of the most talked about TV events of recent times: as Rainie Cross in *EastEnders* and Lucy Stevens in *Broadchurch*. But more about those later as we are talking the day after press night for *Contact.com*, the new play at the Park Theatre in which Tanya takes to the stage alongside fellow *EastEnders*' alumni Charlie Brooks. It's funny, frisky and, once again, far from the real Tanya Franks.

'It's about two couples that make an arrangement on an internet dating site to meet and stay together,' she explains. 'What I liked about it is the fact it's a really fun piece and cheeky, but it also has a real element of drama in there with twists and turns. It's a scenario that I wouldn't imagine jumping into in my own life!'

The theatre, however, is something that Tanya feels far more comfortable with. 'I did 14 years in theatre before I went into TV,' she says. 'I try to combine the two, with bits of film thrown in, as well as lots of radio. I try to keep the mixture of mediums because they all require different disciplines for a start. I love theatre, but I also like being in front of a camera too. I wouldn't want to choose one over the other.'

Broadchurch stars Olivia Colman and David Tennant

Residing in Highbury, did she feel her part of North London needed something like the Park Theatre? 'I think it did,' she nods. 'Islington in itself has lots of theatres and a lot of culture in it. There's another theatre that has opened above the Hope & Anchor, but once you get to Finsbury Park it becomes a little quieter. It's a perfect location. Jez Bond [the man behind Park Theatre and its Artistic Director] is doing a brilliant job there – it's only been open for 20 months or so, but it has managed to really build a reputation almost overnight. There are great actors going in there, playing to packed houses, and they are doing really amazing plays.' ›

MAGNUS HASTINGS

Rainie Cross will have a role to play in uncovering Lucy Beale's killer

Park Theatre has been a huge hit in North London

Contact.com joins that impressive roster and you have until mid-February to catch Tanya there. Once the curtain comes down, however, there's the small matter of *EastEnders*' live show to mark its 30th anniversary. 'I am part of it, yes,' Tanya says a little warily. The actual live episode, where we find out – finally – who killed Lucy Beale? 'No, in flashback elements…' That's as much as we will get out of Tanya about the storyline itself, but what's it like to keep returning to Rainie, the sister of Tanya Branning who happens to be a drug and drink addict? 'She's such a fabulous character,' Tanya responds agreeably. 'I learn so much through her. She's just so extreme compared to me, so she's always a lovely challenge to play and I enjoy trying to stick to the truth of her, rather than sensationalise anything. It's lovely to go back and see the cast again.'

Just as she plays a key role in uncovering one mystery, Tanya was also involved in a crucial scene in the first series of *Broadchurch*. The drama starring Olivia Colman and David Tennant gripped the nation back in 2013, so much so that when the killer of Danny Latimer was revealed it made headlines in the national newspapers. 'I am actually in the two biggest TV secrets out there,' Tanya says, almost with a hint of disbelief, 'who killed Lucy Beale and *Broadchurch*. It's a little bit weird when you can't speak to anybody about it, but also exciting at the same time. What I love about it is the audience has to watch it to see what's going to happen. We have got into this cycle of TV shows leaking stories and that drives me nuts. Some trailers for films tell the whole story! You want the audience to go on a journey with you.'

With something like Broadchurch, you want the audience to go on a journey with you

Tanya's one vice: Paul A. Young

Tanya's own journey continues at pace – her character has returned for the second series of *Broadchurch* and she will be heading back over to the US soon to mull over projects that side of the Atlantic. It's time to let her go off and prepare for that evening's performance of *Contact.com*, but one final discussion about her Islington loves – which includes Prawn on the Lawn, Zen Mondo and Romeo's – and we finally detect a hint of a vice in Tanya Franks. 'Paul A. Young,' she gushes about the Camden Passage chocolatier. 'If there's any dealer in my life it's Paul A. Young – I spend all my money in there!'

Contact.com runs at Park Theatre until mid-February, and Broadchurch series two is on now

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WINDOW TO THE WORLD

Celebrating the masters of their craft

Zaha Hadid and Lee Broom may be at different stages of their respective careers, but in this month's Homes section we are offered a fascinating insight into how their minds work and their views on the design industry. Dominic McKenzie does likewise, opening the doors to his own home – pictured above – to illustrate his approach to architecture, plus don't miss Kara O'Reilly's four page kitchen special.

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Philip Askew joins the Stone King property team

Philip Askew has been appointed Associate Solicitor in the private client property team at Stone King solicitors. Philip is based full time at Stone King's London offices on St John's Lane, Clerkenwell.

Philip joins the team as part of the firm's growth strategy in this sector.

His key to a successful property transaction is capturing as much information about a property as early as possible, to avoid unnecessary and unwelcomed delays, and being in constant contact with his clients. When acting for sellers, he will advise them if any paperwork is needed before he issues contracts to a buyer's solicitors, such as the availability of certificates for alterations to properties. When acting for buyers, he will immediately flag up the issues that need ironing out before exchange of contracts, such as the requirement for a lease extension, or any variation to a lease.

Philip pulls out all the stops for his clients. He recently acted in the sale of high value, unregistered land on behalf of the estate of a deceased client which needed particularly sensitive handling. Despite all title deeds and supporting paperwork being available and in good order, the buyer's solicitors refused to proceed with the purchase without Philip registering the title. This request was made 6 weeks into the transaction!

By preparing a thorough application and working with the Land Registry, Philip succeeded in ensuring the registration of the title was completed in only 10 working days. An application for first registration can take anything up to 6 months.

Philip kept his clients, the agents and the buyer's solicitors updated throughout. This ensured that all parties never doubted that completion was achievable within a workable timetable.

Please call Philip on 020 7324 1538, or email philipaskew@stoneking.co.uk for a fixed-fee quote.

The "Our People" section of our website www.stoneking.co.uk has further information on Philip's qualifications and background.

SK

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BRIGITTE LACOMBE

POWER TALK

In the first of our masters of craft interviews, architect Zaha Hadid reveals the people and places that have inspired her

Words CATHERINE MCCABE

Your offices are based in Clerkenwell – what do you love about this part of the City?
As a practice, we've been here for 31 years and seen massive changes in that time, with the most astonishing having taken place recently. There's been a natural evolution – and with Thameslink and Crossrail intersecting at Farringdon in the next few years, these changes will continue. Clerkenwell just has this boisterous energy. People like to meet here and I really enjoy the area – it's not somewhere I just work.

Which London building sticks out in your mind the most?
I really like the brutalist, post 1960s buildings on the South Bank – the Hayward Gallery, the National Theatre, all that area. It's one of the few examples of post-60s work remaining in London. This brutalist architecture has fallen out of favour and most of it is being demolished, but it's actually some of the best examples of architecture in London.

What changes would you like to see in the approach to London's architecture?
London always inspires projects that are unpredictable. There are still all these quirky situations within the City, with extraordinary adjacencies that make the City so unique. There are enormous sites in London currently being developed for its transport infrastructure, so there is a question about how to deal with very large buildings on these sites. There is tremendous potential here, and often the more radical it is, the more appropriate. The majority of work in London is corporate, which sees the private domain having a tremendous impact on the city. This should be discussed. In New York, many of the city's large corporate developments such as the Rockefeller Centre include public spaces that are as much a part of New York's public realm as the city's civic buildings and parks. London should learn from this and ensure its corporate projects engage with the city and its public domain. ›

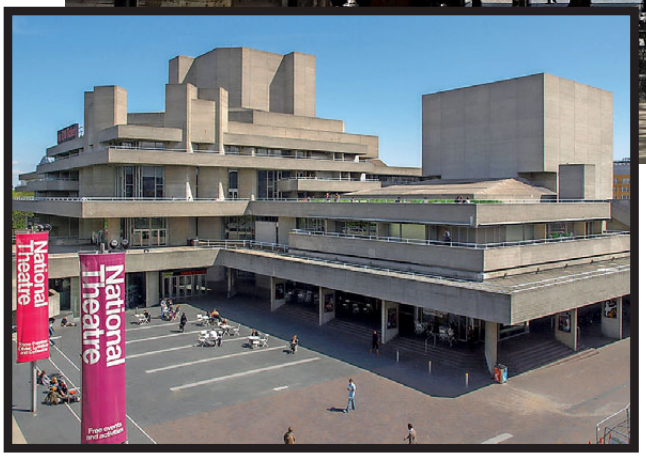
London always inspires projects that are unpredictable. There's tremendous potential

Zaha is behind the design of the Women Fashion Power exhibition

Zaha has been based in Clerkenwell for 31 years

You have designed the Women Fashion Power exhibition at the Design Museum. What does that mean to you?
The exhibition explores how women in many different situations around the world use fashion. It includes women from such a variety of nationalities, industries and periods – of course there are great contrasts, but I also find what connects these women very interesting.

What did you want to achieve with the design?
The exhibition is structured around two central hubs or 'explosions'; the first housing the Timeline component, the second the Arena of Power. This conceptual arrangement expresses the power and energy of fashion as explored by the exhibition. Each fragment of the explosion is employed as a mode of display, highlighting individual pieces whilst also creating a sense of cohesiveness for the many different objects exhibited.



The brutalist architecture of the National Theatre appeals to Zaha

Who is the most inspirational woman to you?
The teachers who taught sciences in the school I went to as a young girl in Baghdad were all professors from the university, so the standards of science courses were really incredible. The Headmistress, who was a nun, was very committed to the education of women.

What has been your most exciting project to date and why?
That's a tough question; it's like asking a parent who is their favourite child! I can't decide on just one project as each of my buildings represent different periods with new challenges, so I am equally proud of all of them. In every period there are new challenges, and our designs always become more ambitious as we see the new possibilities created by advancements in design, construction and material technologies. The construction industry continues to provide ever more sophisticated tools and materials, and there is a strong reciprocal relationship whereby our more avant-garde designs encourage the development of new design technologies and construction techniques – and those new developments inspire us to push the design envelope ever further. Great things come from this way of working!

If there were no restrictions or outside factors to consider, what would be your dream construction in London?
Part of architecture's job is to make people feel good in the spaces where we live, go to school or where we receive healthcare – so we must be committed to raising standards of our homes, schools and hospitals. Architects now have the skills and tools to address these critical issues – and many communities around the world are committed to resolving them. Architects can make a difference in London too – if we are just given the opportunity.

Women Fashion Power runs until 26 April at the Design Museum; designmuseum.org

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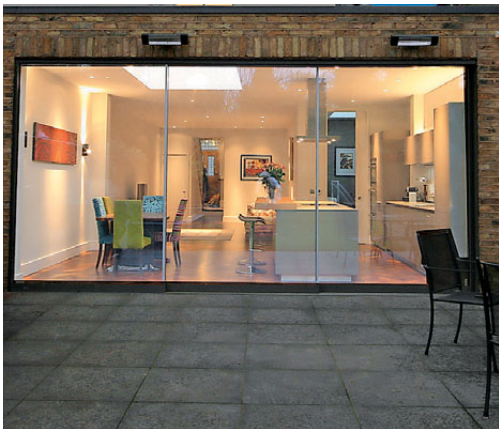

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CLEAN SWEEP

Working with marble, revamping one of Clarks' best-selling boots or designing high end bars, Lee Broom takes it all in his stride

Words MARK KEBBLE

You've already read about how exciting Zaha Hadid believes Clerkenwell is, but head a little further east and you come across the creative hub of London. Shoreditch may have changed over recent years, but there remains a distinct edge about it – and designers like Lee Broom are at the forefront of the area's flourishing creativity.

Stepping into his Electra House showroom is like walking into some fantastical exhibition. Classic designs are housed in huge glass bubbles and sit alongside his more recent collections, including Nouveau Rebel. It's an example of how Lee is truly ahead of the game as it's not often we see Italian Carrara marble and hand-blown lead crystal fused together. 'People really appreciate the craftsmanship on the pieces,' Lee smiles at my awe-struck reaction. 'We really struggled with the manufacturers to get what we wanted and we really had to push their techniques to create some of the pieces and do things in marble that hadn't been done in that way before.'

Globe Light, part of the Nouveau Rebel range

We had to push techniques to do things in marble that hadn't been done before

There's something rather theatrical about Lee Broom's work, perhaps not a surprise when looking at his background. Heading off to theatre school – 'I had already been working in that industry for about 12 years as a child actor,' Lee recalls – on the face of it the career he ultimately found himself in didn't seem apparent. Not so, suggests the man himself. 'I always had a passion for design and drawing,' he remarks. 'My dad was an artist and he taught me how to draw. In my bedroom as a child, my walls were sprawled with a lot of architecture and buildings that I wanted to create. I was fascinated by architecture as a kid.'

Winning a fashion design competition at 17 led to him working with Vivienne Westwood, who inspired him to put that

ANTON

Chamber houses a sculptural Carrara marble diffuser within a lead crystal vessel

Online
Lee lets us into his creative process at theresident.co.uk

The design at Old Tom & English features a host of Lee Broom classics

childhood love into practice. He launched his own company in 2007 – just as the recession started. Despite the general economic gloom, however, his star shone through. 'It was a little bit worrying to launch something that had designed itself around high end furniture pieces, which had a price tag of £3,000 upwards,' Lee admits. 'But the recession enabled small businesses like mine to really thrive, as my overheads were very small. If you can build a business and survive a recession, my hope was that out the other end we would really flourish.'

It's fair to say that's happened and then some. Lee has a host of awards to his name, including Designer of the Year at the British Design Awards 2011 and winner of Elle Decoration British Design Award for The Crystal Bulb in 2012. 'Previous to that my collections were known really just within the design industry,' Lee says on how that piece changed everything. 'It enabled me to step out of design circles and go into the public consciousness.'

The fact he was also voted 13th most influential person in the bar industry in Theme Magazine's Top 100 for 2009 points towards another aspect of the Lee Broom brand. To date he has designed over 40 retail, restaurant and bar interiors, the latest of which is Old Tom & English in Soho. Designed for brother and sister duo Maria and Costas Constantinou, Old Tom & English offers personally prepared cocktails and twists on traditional English dishes at the basement venue. 'I wanted to create a space where it felt like you were going into someone's home,' Lee explains the design concept. 'I wanted it to be very welcoming. It's a lot more modern than anything I have created before, but there are still some nods to the 60s.' It looks fabulous and is a what's what of Lee Broom collection classics: Nouveau Rebel lighting, the sculptural Globe Light provides a warming glow, Marble Tube Lights frame the bespoke marble fireplace, and On the Rock glassware is used to serve signature cocktails. Look out, too, for his celebrated Crystal Bulb created with new cuts.

Saying his team work on around 50 ideas at a time, who knows what will emerge next from Lee Broom, but it's sure to surprise. After all, this is a man who has just collaborated with Clarks to celebrate 65 years of their iconic Desert Boot and its contribution to British street style. 'I am doing a Mods & Rockers Boot,' he says on his version. 'The Desert Boot was popular with the Mods, so I wanted to combine the two.' It's undoubtedly electric times at Electra House.

95 Rivington Street EC2A 3AY; 020 7820 0742; leebroom.com

Light is a key feature to many of Dominic McKenzie's designs, highlighted perfectly at Bower House

PLAYING WITH HISTORY

Acclaimed architect Dominic McKenzie discusses the challenges he faces with Angel's buildings – and how it all started at home

BY MARK KEBBLE

When trying to get a message across, is there a better way of doing it than by achieving it with something personal rather than through a third person? It's certainly the case when it comes to showing what Dominic McKenzie is capable of – after all, one of his most celebrated buildings, Bower House, happens to be his own home.

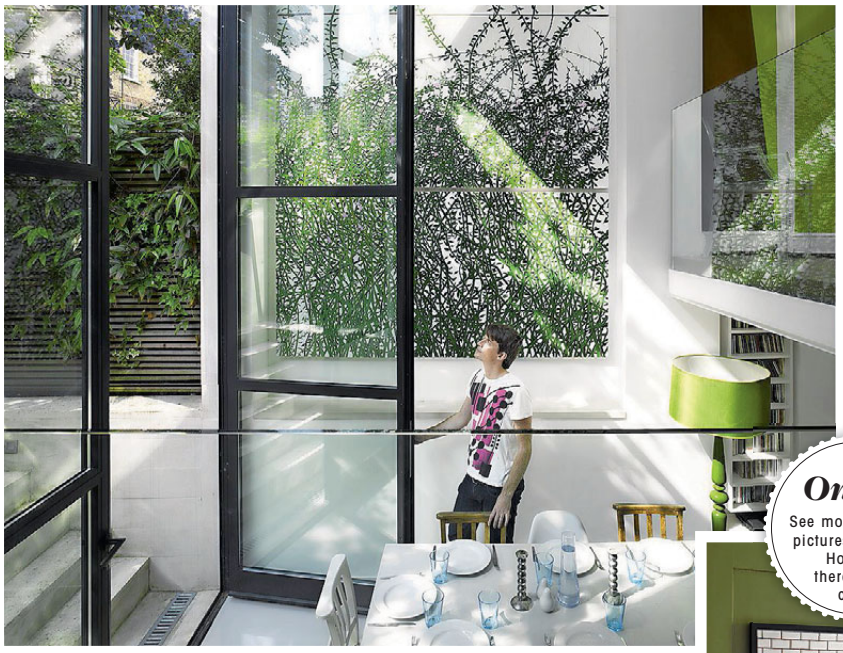
'I designed it for myself and my wife ten years ago, it was my first project in the area,' he recounts about his Barnsbury abode. 'The key idea in Bower House – and indeed in much of the work we do – is to connect the house to the garden, hence the name. A bower is a quiet, secret part of a garden and it seemed very appropriate here given the quality of the rear garden. There is a large ceanothus tree in the back garden, which turns bright blue with the blossom in the spring. I wanted to celebrate this and to bring some of this magical garden quality into the house.'

From the outside, Bower House doesn't look out of place from the Georgian buildings of the area, which leads the discussion on to Islington architecture in general. 'The quality of the Georgian architecture is really exceptional,' Dominic says of Barnsbury. 'The squares and the streets are some of the finest in London, there are a lot of architectural lessons to be learnt here. A large percentage of the buildings are listed, which can certainly be challenging. We specialise in creating beautiful contemporary homes that are carefully tuned to the historic architecture of the original building. The constant challenge is to strike a balance between a respect for the original building with more contemporary desires like maximising space and light.'

Bower House is a stunning example of just that. 'Whilst the Georgian houses are fantastic, beautiful and functional works of architecture, one of their shortcomings is that the original rooms tend to be rather small with small windows – especially to the rear,' Dominic says. 'I wanted to create a large light filled room that would both connect the existing rooms to each other and to the rear garden. This led to the creation of the double height rear extension, which is glazed from top to bottom.'

As USPs go, this would take some beating. Looking at the design from the rear of the house is stunning enough, but the effect inside is even better, especially with the fact that whatever level you are ›

WILL PRYCE



Online
See more amazing pictures of Bower House at theresident.co.uk

From the rear extension to bespoke master bedroom, Bower House has plenty to shout about

on, you can experience the glazed structure. 'That's exactly right,' Dominic nods in agreement. 'The rear extension is not massive in terms of square metre area – it only extends about three metres from the back wall of the house – but what it does is connect all the existing rooms together and to the garden, making the existing house feel much bigger. The glass balustrades at the back of the ground floor living room allow you to lie on the sofa at the front of the house and have a view straight out to the garden. Similarly, when you are cooking at the kitchen island in the basement you can also see out to the garden.'

The last point is an interesting one as, despite how stunning the rear extension looks, someone else felt the kitchen was the focal point of Bower House. 'We recently had the BBC filming and they concentrated specifically on the kitchen, ignoring the huge doors and double height space, which is saying something,' Dominic laughs. 'The kitchen was another fun idea I thought we should try. At the time when I designed it ten years ago, you saw stainless steel everywhere, but I thought why not try brass, which you see used for counters in French bistros. The kitchen island forms the centrepiece of the front room in the converted basement. When you come from the staircase into the room, the island appears like this incredible glowing block of gold because it's lit from above with downlighters. It's a real wow factor moment.'

With two such stand out aspects, it's

The creation of a great project is a collaboration between a good architect and a good client

easy to forget there's plenty more to enjoy at Bower House. There are four bedrooms in the original house, but it was the addition of a master bedroom that deserves most recognition. 'That is housed in the mansard roof extension at the top of the house, which is another unusual and bespoke room,' Dominic explains. 'It occupies the entire top floor of the house, is lined with tongue and groove cladding, and has a walk-in wet room/shower area at the back of it.'

So by literally doing it himself, Dominic showed the public what he was capable of, and the likes of the BBC, Living etc., Vogue Living, Elle Decoration and Grand Designs magazine have lapped it up. 'The recognition means a lot to me and can also lead on to more work, which is great,' Dominic says. 'The creation of a great project, however, is a collaboration between a good architect and also a good client. There needs to be a feeling of trust and a collective ambition to create something together that's really special.'

Contact Dominic McKenzie Architects by calling 020 3302 0794; dominicmckenzie.co.uk

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This contemporary Urbo bespoke kitchen designed by Roundhouse is matt-finished in Farrow & Ball's Down Pipe; roundhousedesign.com

THE TIMELESS EFFECT

Plan your kitchen carefully and it could last you a decade

Story KARA O'REILLY

Before you start

If you are planning a kitchen revamp, do your research and have a sense of what you need before meeting with a kitchen designer. 'It's always helpful if the client knows what they do and don't like, and if there are specific appliances that they would like incorporated into the design – such as a range cooker,' says Robert Burnett, Head of Design at Holloways of Ludlow (hollowayskitchens.com). 'Also think about how you use your kitchen and make sure the design matches your needs,' advises Jamie Telford, Director of Roundhouse (roundhousedesign.com). 'For example, are you a serious cook who needs acres of prep space and robust work surfaces, or do you do a lot of entertaining and need a dedicated dining area?' ›

A luxurious, slick kitchen by Holloways of Ludlow in a striking, high-gloss, Farrow & Ball off-black finish with a stained oak breakfast bar and Siemens appliances; hollowayskitchens.com

NICK SMITH

The kitchen is at the heart of the home, a social hub as well as a food factory

John Lewis's House collection is all about affordable modern design; johnlewis.com

More for your money

Think about how much you really want to spend and that way you will maximise what you get for your budget. 'Pick a price and stick to it,' says John Sims-Hilditch, co-founder of Neptune (neptune.com). 'Once you have your budget, look at what you want to achieve; will it require a complete revamp with building work? Generally, planning permission isn't required when installing a kitchen unless it's part of an extension or a listed property. You should also consider how long you plan on staying in your home – don't spend all your savings on a kitchen you will only use for the next five years.'

'Usually approximately 50% of the price of a kitchen is spent on cabinets; the rest is on appliances, worktops and installation – which will cost the same whatever the kitchen,' adds Robert. Get your final quote in writing and make sure it includes labour and installation costs. Finally, 'it's always worth putting aside 20% of your budget to allow for margin of error,' says John.

You get what you pay for

'Although a bespoke kitchen is a significant outlay, an "off-the-shelf" kitchen may mean continual maintenance after a few years, just to keep it going,' advises Jamie. 'Remember that the kitchen is the most heavily used room of the house. It's at the heart of the home, a social hub as well as a food factory.'

Tim Moss's kitchens are characterised by an understated simplicity of line and a natural pallet of quality materials

The benefits of bespoke

Go bespoke and these specialist companies really can make your dream kitchen come to life. 'For example, they won't say no when a customer asks if their cabinets can extend to the ceiling or if they want the worktop to be 955mm high,' says Robert. 'A bespoke kitchen gets designed to make the best of all the available space. Also, there is no limit on the size of the cabinet, the shape of the cabinet, the colour or type of material. Clients simply end up with a much finer, more practical kitchen with greater storage capacity.'

Current trends

'With pressure on every inch of space in urban homes, combined with the desire for a large social area, open-plan kitchens with a large, multifunctional island are the most popular,' says Jamie. 'Classic, hand-painted, "in-frame" kitchens appear to be making a comeback, particularly in period properties,' adds Robert. 'When considering the colour of your kitchen, soft, neutral tones such as minks and blue-greys are timeless choices.'

Timeless good looks

'Kitchens that display craftsmanship, functionality and are designed to be unique are more likely to withstand the test of the time, in the same way as a well-designed and crafted piece of furniture,' Robert concludes.

This Suffolk kitchen by Neptune epitomises modern country chic; neptune.com

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Tim Moss (020 8444 9911; timmoss.co.uk)

COLOURFUL IMAGINATION

Not content with having successful restaurants and best-selling cookbooks to his name, Vivek Singh is brightening up the City too

Words MARK KEBBLE

If you picked the right time to visit Cinnamon Kitchen – Vivek Singh's hugely successful restaurant on Devonshire Square – last year, you would have been greeted with the rather random sight of City suits swamped in colourful powder and with silly grins spread across their face. The reason? The House of Holi, a purpose-built party pod.

'Holi is one of my favourite festivals of all time,' says the acclaimed chef, a delight to talk to. 'Diwali has become pretty mainstream here, but Holi is still relatively low key.' Hence why he came up with The House of Holi.

It's a small, but intriguing insight into the mind of one of Britain's best-known Indian chefs. Chatting to him, you get the sense that he is always thinking ahead, about what he could open up next to a grateful London audience. It mirrors his approach when he first came to the UK with the desire to do something new. 'I knew London had lots of Indian restaurants and loved its curry,' he remembers back to 2000, 'but it was interesting for me that if you looked at the really great Indian chefs and restaurants, I could count them on my hands. Largely what was being served up was pretty unimaginative. I could see a real opportunity.'

Vivek Singh has three successful London restaurants

Lassi panna cotta, an example of how Vivek twists traditional classics

The colourful House of Holi

That opportunity evolved into The Cinnamon Club, launched in 2001 to widespread acclaim. It was seven years later that Vivek's cooking came a little closer to North Londoners with the opening of The Cinnamon Kitchen. 'The Cinnamon Club is about pushing the boat out in a grand dining room, with a rather serious ambience – and that's partly due to the building being the former Westminster Library,' he looks at the differences between the two. 'Over almost seven years of serving 80,000 people a year, you wouldn't believe the number of times we were asked if you had to be a member to come in, or if children were welcome. I wanted it to be more accessible, more welcoming, something that would reflect the sensibilities of "New India" – not just in the food, but in the atmosphere.'

Tandoori chicken pizza

Online

Find out how Marco Pierre White inspired Vivek Singh's career at theresident.co.uk

Another seven years on and that desire to entertain hasn't diminished in the slightest, particularly if my recent visit to The Cinnamon Kitchen was anything to go by. The food was universally excellent – from the stir-fried shrimps in a delightfully tangy apricot glaze to the smoked saddle of Kentish lamb, which had just the right amount of spice, even through to an astonishing side dish in the form of the smoked aubergine crush – the staff friendly, and the buzz thrilling to be part of.

I wanted my restaurant to be more accessible, more welcoming, something that would reflect 'New India'

Cinnamon Soho opened in 2012, but it's not just through restaurants that Vivek wants to break down barriers. He has five cookbooks to his name, with the latest – *Spice at Home* – hitting the best sellers' list before the end of 2014. 'It's the first book that's not about the restaurant or a specific subject matter, but about how it's possible to include spice in any form for people to cook at home,' Vivek explains. 'It's more about enjoyment and making cooking an experience. It's my favourite book I have written so far.'

Vivek believes there's room for 'three or four more' restaurants in London based on The Cinnamon Kitchen approach. For now, it's all about Holi, with a special five-course menu – featuring such delights as chargrilled sprouting broccoli with almonds and rose petals, and Kentish lamb 'pasanda' with rock moss and allspice – running alongside the pop-up party pod from 5-14 March. Vivek, for one, can't wait. 'Holi is one festival that's not religious at all. It celebrates friendships and has that element of fun,' he says with glee. 'Just don't wear your best clothes…'

The House of Holi takes place at Cinnamon Kitchen, 9 Devonshire Square EC2M 4YL; 020 7626 5000; cinnamon-kitchen.com

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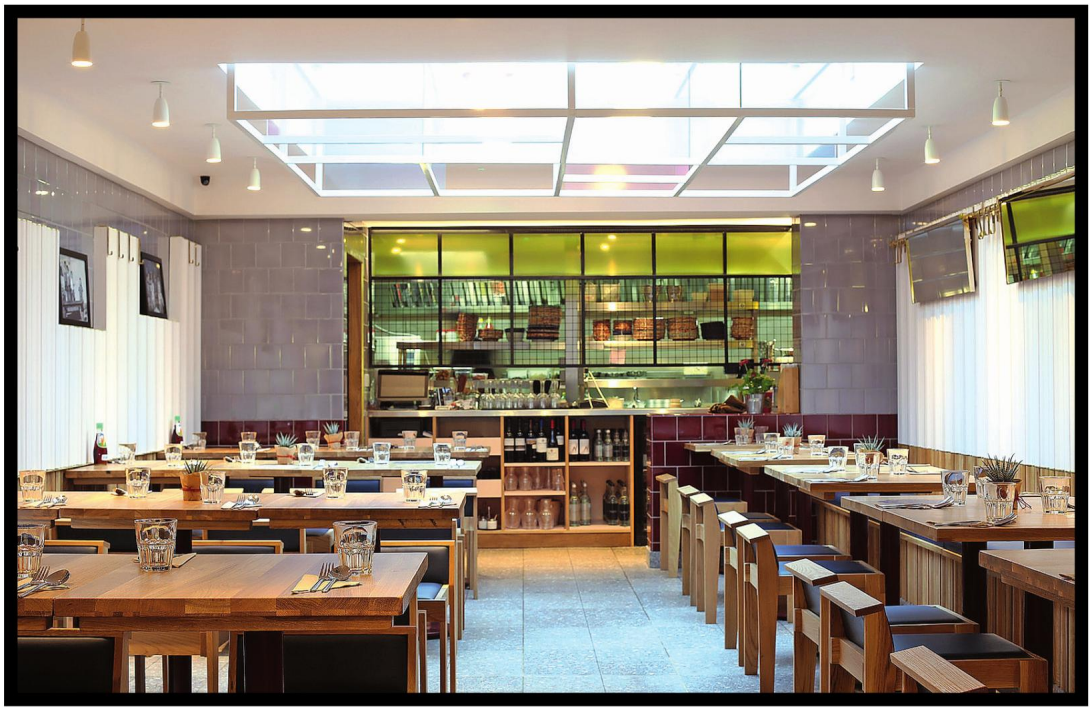


ROSA'S THAI CAFÉ

Words MARK KEBBLE

Complicated Noodles, a DIY dish with minced pork and fresh Thai herbs

The rise and rise of Rosa's Thai Café has been quite a gastronomical journey. Starting life as a food stall on Brick Lane, today there are five restaurant sites including this new opening on Theberton Street. There are more than a few nods to its street food beginnings: from the simple, but cosy interior to the fast-paced meal my wife and I had (we were in and out within an hour), although the most important similarity is the fact the food remains absolutely superb.

Seated in a brass-top booth with surprisingly comfortable wood panelling behind our heads, the menu makes for great reading. The starters, in particular, demand your attention and we had to choose three after debating for far too long over the two we should go for. The Thai calamari is a specialty here and the juicy, fat chunks of squid were certainly easy on the palate. The home-made Thai sausage came with the promise of a 'kick' – more like a hammer blow, the spiciness of the dish blew me away. The fish cakes didn't initially materialise – we'll put that down to early teething issues – but when they did, it was worth the wait, particularly with the addictive crushed peanuts and sweet chilli sauce on the side.

The sea bass is another specialty of Rosa's, but unfortunately we didn't have the chance to try it as they were sold out, so Karen opted for the stir fried prawn with Pad Thai sauce, and I went for the grilled smoked duck breast with tamarind sauce. Both dishes were good, but the surprise was the stir fried aubergine side order. Served up with yellow bean, chilli, garlic, soya sauce and sweet basil, it surpassed anything else we had during the evening (arguably the first time I have picked a vegetable as a winning dish).

There are no desserts on Rosa's menu, so it's left to cocktails if you want to have a sweet end to your meal. This was an intriguing place to review: the food is unquestionably excellent and, if they iron out a few niggles here and there, then the Rosa's Thai Café story is set to live on happily ever after in Angel.

6 Theberton Street N1 0QX; 020 3393 2482; rosasthaicafe.com/angel

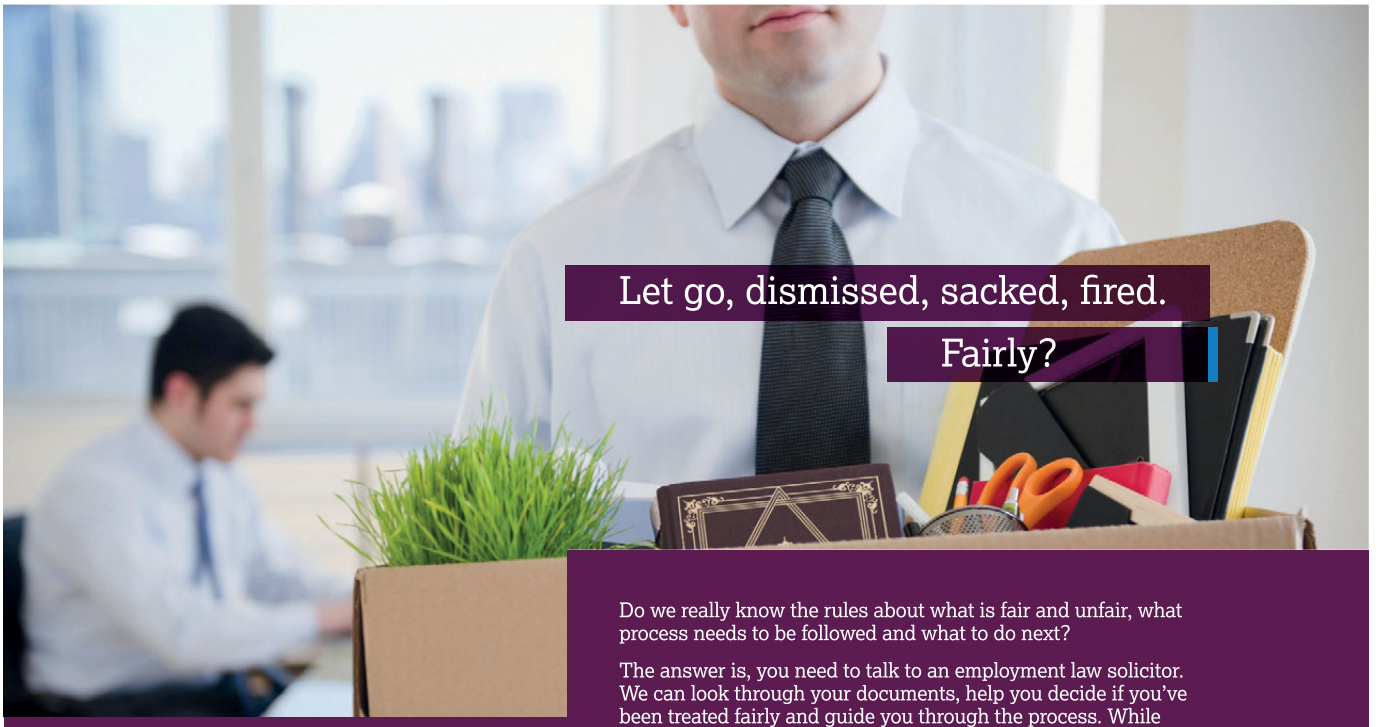
COST
It's great value, where you are looking at an average spend of £25 per head

GOOD FOR...
A quick meal pre-theatre or one full of spice to banish these lingering winter days

WHAT TO EAT...
Look out for the red markings on their menu: these are the Rosa's Thai Café specialities and we couldn't agree more with the aubergine pick

WHAT TO KNOW...
You can hire the rear section of the restaurant for private parties, which offers up to 42 covers

RESIDENT RATING
★★★★★



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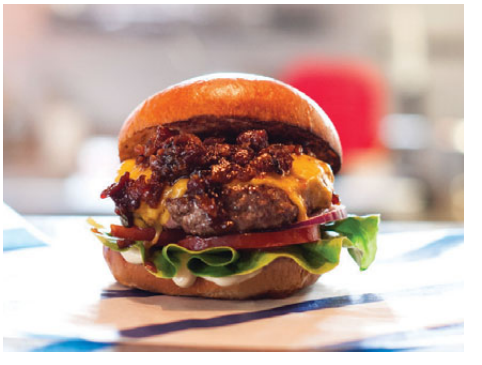


10 *of London's top new* RESTAURANT OPENINGS

Hodge Jones & Allen help the victims of somebody else's negligence

Fact, not fiction

Hodge Jones & Allen's Simon O'Loughlin reveals the truth about Personal Injury law

It is all too common to hear stories of how the no win, no fee system has stifled growth and innovation in the UK. It was introduced to improve access to justice and was a very positive step. Sadly, since its introduction, there have been many stories that have cast doubt on the integrity of the personal injury claims process and spread damaging myths that often prevent people with legitimate claims of negligence coming forward. Let's put some of those myths to bed…

Myth – Personal injury claims are spiralling out of control

Truth. Compensation claims have fallen every year for the last five years. For example statistics show that every year over 850,000 people suffer an injury as a result of their job and over 25,000 people are forced to give up work due to work-related injuries or illness. Nine out of every ten of these people, however, receive no compensation.

Myth – Compensation is paid automatically for any accident

Truth. This is not true. Compensation is only paid when injuries have been caused by negligence. Negligence is when an accident was foreseeable and the actions or inactions of someone else caused injury. Britain pays out much less compensation, as a proportion of its GDP, than any other major European country apart from Denmark, and a third of that of the USA.

Myth - We are heading for a US style system

Truth. No evidence for this. Our legal systems are completely different. In the USA compensation awards are decided by juries. In Britain awards are made by judges and there are very strict regulations on compensation payments.

Myth - Personal injury claims are a burden on business.

Truth. It is a legal requirement for employers to have insurance cover for their employees in case they are injured through negligence at work. Personal injury claims are usually paid out by insurance companies. The fact remains that if there had been no negligence then the person who has suffered injury would not be making a claim for compensation. Therefore it is the failure to prevent negligence in the first place that is a problem that needs to be addressed.

I've shared some of the myths – my experience of over 12 years tells me the real truth is that our personal injury process in the UK helps people obtain justice and be compensated for the pain and distress if they are injured through no fault of their own. It secures access to early rehabilitation and covers medical costs, loss of income and care needs.

The people we meet do not get hurt in order to get rich. Their lives have been turned upside down by someone else's negligence. Hodge Jones & Allen are London's personal injury solicitors and we help injured victims fight back.

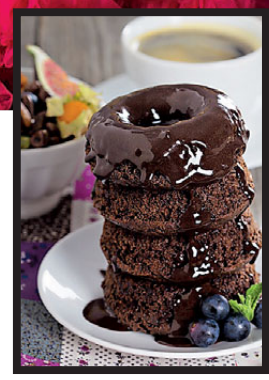
Simon O'Loughlin is a partner at Hodge Jones & Allen. If you wish to discuss a possible claim with Simon please call him on 020 7874 8451 or email soloughlin@hja.net

PETITE PERFORMERS

For all budding performers out there aged three to 12 years, we highly recommend Turnstyles Creative Arts Academy where you can try ballet, street dance and drama, all while building your confidence and learning new skills. The sessions are taught at Platform on Hornsey Road. turnstylescreativearts.co.uk

MINI *RESIDENT*

Bridget Jacottet's latest news for the family



MUM'S THE WORD

Bill's Islington has a varied kids' menu, and Mother's Day is a great excuse to share some cinnamon doughnuts dipped in chocolate sauce. 9 White Lion Street N1 9PD; 020 7713 7272

SEASON TO BE CHEERFUL

Igloo Kids is the place to go in Islington for cool spring/summer stylish pieces for children. We love these Angulus shoes from their new collection, which banishes away any lingering winter blues. Look out for similar styles available in their Upper Street shop.

300 Upper Street N1 2TU; 020 7254 7300; iglookids.co.uk

Making history

Horrible Histories author Terry Deary has chosen eight-year-old Lexi Jary at The Gower School as the winner of the VTech Short Story Competition. Lexi composed a fast-paced, thrilling ride through ancient and modern history, meeting several interesting characters along the way.

18 North Road N7 9EY; 020 7700 2445; thegowerschool.co.uk

Cooing about

We love this Alpaca ribbed sweater from MamaOwl. Focusing on the purity of children, Esencia's products are made from the finest natural alpaca and llama fibres and organic cotton, cooperating only with suppliers who value the principles of fair trade and sustainability. While on the subject, look out for Pacca Alpaca – a cute new app available for phones and tablets from iTunes or GooglePlay.

Find out more about both at mamaowl.net and paccaalpaca.com

John Hall Venice is a gap year course in London, Venice, Florence and Rome which opens eyes, ears and minds – a life-changing and unforgettable experience. The course covers arts, literature, music, world cinema, global issues, cookery, life drawing and photography, as well as experiencing Venice during carnival time. It is aimed at students from across the academic spectrum – both sciences and arts.

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HEAD FOR *HEIGHTS*

Angel-based Alexandra Harper has established a global fanbase thanks to her seemingly unlimited ambition

Words MARK KEBBLE

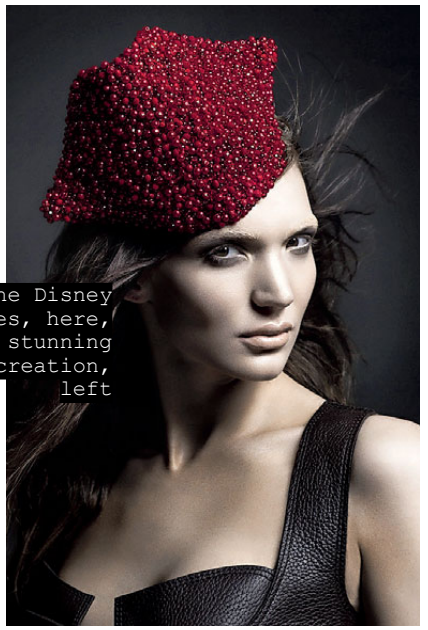
If you thought the life of a successful milliner is all about weddings and the races, then meeting Alexandra Harper will certainly make you think again. On the back of two successful collaborations with Disney – based around the film *Maleficent* and character Tinker Bell – she has another due this month to mark the cinematic release of *Cinderella*, not to mention a rather exciting sounding collaboration to celebrate the new *Star Wars* film. Oh and she has also made a hat out of chocolate. 'A hat made out of chocolate? Who wouldn't be keen!' she exclaims about taking up the commission. 'The opportunity to use a non-traditional material like chocolate to create a wearable headpiece was too good to miss.'

It's no wonder Alexandra sounds delighted with life when we catch her in Hong Kong, on the way back from a trip to Australia. By the time you read this interview, she will be back working in her Angel studio in Arlington Way, which she opened pretty much a year to the day. 'I try to spend as much time in Angel as possible,' she enthuses. 'It is my favourite part of London and a huge source of inspiration.'

It's here that the magic truly happens, where Alexandra gets to work on one-off creations, all hand-made right here in Angel. Blending her expert knowledge of classic millinery with innovative techniques and a directional vision, her luxury headwear exudes style and individuality, and has won her fans all over the world.

Alexandra Harper

Online
Alexandra picks out her three most important commissions at theresident.co.uk



One of the Disney headpieces, here, and a stunning bespoke creation, left

Which brings us to Disney. 'The relationship came about when I met some Disney folks at a fashion event,' Alexandra explains. 'I was, of course, wearing a headpiece and we got chatting about the fashion-based relationships Disney fosters – and the rest is history! It has been amazing to join the list of designers that have collaborated with Disney: Givenchy, Stella McCartney, Valentino, Christian Louboutin…'

A stunning array of names, but Alexandra has earned her place to stand alongside them. She admits the progress of her brand has gone beyond her wildest dreams, and she expresses her delight to be working in an industry that appears to be, from the outside, thriving. 'Particularly in the UK,' she agrees. 'We are a nation of heat wearers, whether it's fashion headwear or winter warmers – and even for men hats are everyday attire. It's very exciting to see hats-as-fashion become more popular, and I have every confidence that the industry is going from strength to strength.'

Despite her collaborations to date – and with some pretty big ones on the horizon too – her love of the job actually boils down to the individual. 'My favourite pieces to work on are bespoke creations for clients who have an extra-special event – it is so much fun and so fulfilling to create an occasion hat for a woman who is commissioning the piece for a meaningful event in her life,' Alexandra beams. 'Whether it's for a bride, her mother or someone attending a Buckingham Palace garden party, it's a joy to get personally involved and provide that client with a piece they will treasure forever.'

25 Arlington Way EC1R 1UY; 020 7833 5948; alexandraharpermillinery.com

The founders of Revolution: Giuseppe Di Credico, Rob Grim and John Grim

THE TRANSFORMERS

Revolution Personal Trainers are celebrating a decade in business, but have they still got it? We sent an Angel local to find out

Words MARK KEBBLE

Sarah White looks as white (sorry) as a ghost. It's just gone 7am and she's waiting for me in the reception of the Business Design Centre, ahead of being introduced to one of the co-founders of Revolution Personal Trainers, Giuseppe Di Credico. As the business celebrates a hugely successful ten years, Sarah is investigating to see if their 12-week transformation programme is still as hot as it was when I experienced it back in 2006 – and she's a little nervous.

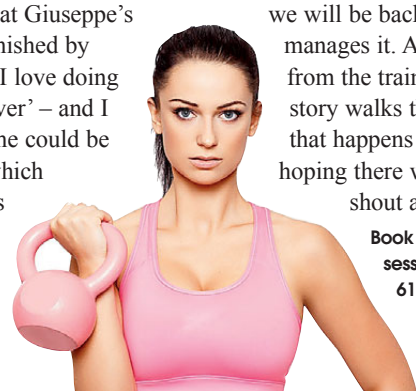
She needn't have worried. Despite the ungodly hour, there's a real buzz in Revolution's studio as soon as we walk in. Ahead of Sarah's programme, Giuseppe needs to find out as much about her as possible to help with creating the right workout, from what she eats to why she wants to shape up.

Post-consultation, I grab a coffee with Giuseppe to find out how things have changed since those heady days when it was just him and brothers Rob and John Grim working with clients (today they have 17 trainers). 'When we set up, personal training was a new thing really,' he takes a sip of his coffee. 'Generally it was all about gym memberships. They sign you up for a year and then they don't want you to come back. I worked in a gym and was disgusted by seeing people come in clearly wanting help – they didn't know what to do, and I was at one of the better gyms too! Over time, more personal training studios have opened up. You can throw a handful of stones and it will hit five studios around here. But we want competition, we believe we are the best at what we do.'

We want competition, we believe we are the best at what we do

We chat about the changing fitness trends – from kettlebells to HIIT – although it always comes down to the individual. I remark that Giuseppe's passion seems undiminished by the passing of time – 'I love doing this, it's the best job ever' – and I add that I wish the same could be said about my body, which is not quite as lively as it was a decade ago. 'First of all, if you haven't got a goal then you can't achieve anything,' Giuseppe counters me. 'When it comes to age, I can give you all the scientific mumbo jumbo, but I prefer layman's terms. From the mid-20s, sometimes later, over the course of a year you will lose 3-5% of muscle mass – IF you are sedentary. If you do train then this is not necessarily the case.'

Back to the studio and Sarah has completed her consultation. A plan of action is in place to help Sarah tone up and, after a little coaxing from Giuseppe, she reveals that she ultimately wants wear a certain figure hugging dress in 12 weeks time – we will be back to report on if she manages it. As a cheer goes up from the trainers when a success story walks through the door – that happens a lot here – here's hoping there will be plenty more to shout about.



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TREASURE HUNT

Skiathos is one of the smaller Greek islands, but is home to plenty of treats. Just don't take everything you see to heart...

Words MARK KEBBLE

There's a choice of three restaurants

Skiathos is a beautiful port-side town

As sweat poured from my forehead, I must admit I had a moment where I questioned my sanity. It was 30 degrees plus outside in the midday sun and here I was, alone, in the Skiathos Princess Hotel's gym struggling on the treadmill. I blame the healthy living locals, but more on that later.

I have had the pleasure of visiting several of the Greek islands, but Skiathos is arguably the cutest of the lot. Only seven miles long and four miles wide, it wouldn't take long to drive around it, but size isn't everything as this is an island of immense beauty. There are numerous beaches and the main port-side town is all historic buildings and cobbled streets.

However, for our week-long stay, the destination for my wife and I was the rather more modern Princess Hotel. A popular family destination, this five-star offering is part of the Santikos Collection of luxury hotels. Our deluxe room had a wonderful view of the sea, and the open-plan room had everything we needed and more (the study desk almost enticed me to do a spot of work… almost).

It's easy to see why the Princess Hotel is popular with all-comers. Everything is easy to get to, the two pools and beach are right on your doorstep, there are two lunch alternatives right next to each other, and the three different cuisines offered in the evening are all served up under one roof. The weather was perfect bar the odd storm, which happened during the night or early in the morning, so sunbathing was not affected.

Head down the back streets to find more authenticity, where you'll uncover gems

If it's relaxation you want, then you'd be hard pushed to better the Princess Hotel. Over half of our holiday was spent lounging by the pools and beach, particularly because the furniture was so comfortable to sink into. If that wasn't enough, there is also the on-site spa, where we were both treated to a head, neck and shoulder massage.

Despite the hotel having everything you need, you would be wasting your trip if you didn't venture out into Skiathos itself. The all-day boat trip we enjoyed took in much more than we expected taking into account the size of the island. As well as learning a great deal about its fascinating history, one stop off at a secluded beach was beauty personified.

Back to Skiathos, and time spent at the harbour is a must. The restaurants right on port-side vie for your attention with vast menus and cheaper deals, but head down the back streets to find more authenticity. It was in one of the garden bars that my moment of madness regarding the treadmill was inspired. We are still not quite sure what it was, but there was some kind of mini marathon taking place in town and I felt rather guilty slurping on a Mythos as countless adults and children ran past us in the stifling heat. Anything they can do…

Dig a little deeper and you will uncover more gems. We loved the bar opposite the hotel that hosted a pub quiz one night (we didn't come last, which was a result) and the dog shelter that is currently under threat with closure, something you could tell all who live and work in Skiathos are deeply concerned about. But whatever kind of holiday you are keen on, Skiathos has it covered – even if you have that sadistic streak of going to the gym in stifling temperatures.

All the rooms at Skiathos Princess Hotel are comfortable and spacious

TRIP NOTES

Western & Oriental offers seven night stays at Skiathos Princess Hotel from £915pp, based on two sharing a Club Garden View Room on a Half-Board basis. Price includes return flights and private airport transfers. To book, visit westernoriental.com or call 020 7666 1234

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TIME WATCH

Alwyne Estates' Malcolm Levy discusses four decades in the world of estate agency

First things first Malcolm, you have been working in the property industry for 40 years. Do you remember the first home you ever sold?
I do – although over 40 years ago now, it's hard to forget it. I was 18 and agreed the sale of a three bed semi in Crouch End for £18,000 under the watchful eye of my mentor. The thrill and excitement of the negotiation process, exchange and successful completion of the sale cemented my passion for property and opened the door on a long career spanning four decades and three recessions… and I'm not finished yet!

What's the biggest change – or is it the obvious price increase?
Obviously the huge fluctuations in price throughout the years would represent the biggest change, but for me the considerable change in demographics throughout the London property market is one that stands out. Your typical buyer years ago would have been a married couple with 2 point 4 kids, but this has given rise to buyers such as the highly motivated, young professional investor who is more savvy with their money and driven in their expectations. With ever increasing foreign interest and the population of London due to increase to 8.6m people within the next 12 months we can be sure of further changes ahead.

Alwyne Estates is celebrating 20 years in Highbury & Islington – how would you say the area has evolved?
The gentrification of Highbury and Islington in recent years has led to noticeable changes throughout the area. Unfortunately in the early years we lost some of the old world charm in terms of the character of the neighbourhood, but the stricter planning control laws have had the desired effect of late.

I first came to work on Upper Street in 1986 and the area has changed dramatically since then. At that time the agents in the area were largely independent as it was before the corporates began to get heavily involved. Most of them only dealt in sales as it was only after the 1988 Housing Act was passed that everyone began to deal with lettings. That in itself changed the face of our profession.

Are you positive for what lies ahead in 2015?
I think it's important to be positive in looking to the future, although not at the expense of being cautious. Property investment is always a big step whether you are a seasoned investor or first time buyer. With the coming election, changes to the property market are inevitable, with the recent stamp duty reform being just one example. Before buying, selling or renting, I would encourage all parties to enlist the advice of a seasoned expert who can help you plan your next move with your interest foremost in mind.

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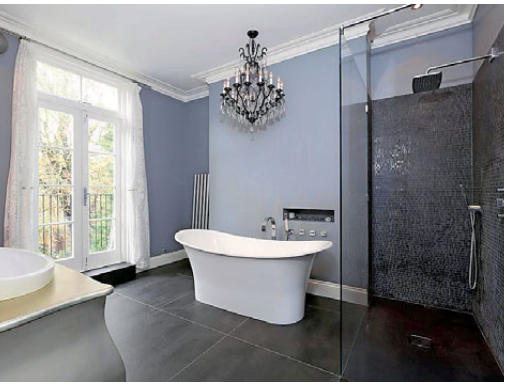

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£2,300,000 Freehold
Spacious family living

A recently refurbished, four bedroom property set within the Barnsbury conservation area. The property benefits from a south facing, landscaped garden and is close to Highbury and Islington and Upper Street. EPC Rating: D

Downham Road, N1
£1,650,000 Freehold
Attractive family home

A beautifully presented three double bedroom, semi-detached house, with great kerb appeal. Located in an attractive cul-de-sac, the house is within easy reach of Angel, Upper Street, Essex Road and Kingsland Road. EPC Rating: E

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HOMES TO VIEW

ST PANCRAS CHAMBERS NW1 – LEASEHOLD

A beautiful apartment with triple height ceilings and windows set in one of the most sought after buildings in central London boasting rare and breathtaking Victorian Gothic architecture.

A rare opportunity to acquire a piece of London's history in a location that has and will continue to see some of the most dramatic capital growth in the City with the continued Kings Cross project and introduction of the Euro Star on the door step.

- Iconic London Building
- Victorian Gothic architecture inside and out
- Study
- Concierge
- Excellent transport links

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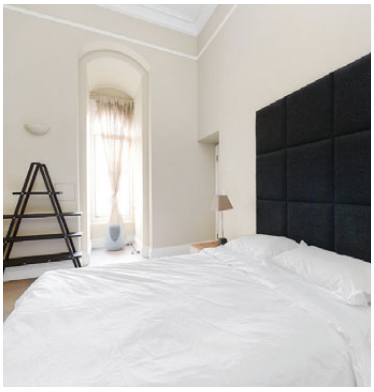
ST PANCRAS CHAMBERS
NW1 – LEASEHOLD
£1,200,000 – 2 bedrooms
EPC rating: E | Ref: ISL140125



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BLACKTHORN AVENUE
N7 – UNFURNISHED
£675 pw – 2 bedrooms
EPC rating: B | Ref: 83376

DEVONIA ROAD
N1 – FURNISHED
£925 pw - 2 bedrooms
EPC rating: D | Ref: 82912

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SOTOGRANDE
€4,750,000 REF: WW189

An elegant, architect designed cortijo style villa of distinction with 7 en suite bedrooms located in a private cul-de-sac in Sotogrande Alto with unrivalled golf fairway views. Features include reclaimed marble flooring and beams, antique doors and a first class luxury spa, gymnasium & padel court.

SOTOGRANDE
€3,280,000 REF: W156

A magnificent luxury villa with 6 bedrooms and 5 bathrooms located in Sotogrande with views towards Valderrama Golf Course and the Mediterranean Sea. This luxury villa has been built to the highest specification and only the finest quality materials have been used. The Villa has a large external pool set within the landscaped garden and internal spa with gymnasium.

JIMENA DE LA FRONTERA
€1,250,000 REF: WW195

A wonderful opportunity to purchase a superb Polo/Equestrian finca of approximately 4.5 hectares close to the white village of Jimena de la Frontera and 20 minutes from Sotogrande. Two houses with two bedrooms and two bathrooms, 22 large loose boxes, grooms quarters, canter track, stick & ball field.

MARBELLA
€950,000 REF: WW199

A fabulous 5 bedroom, 4 bathroom villa built on one level with an independent guest apartment situated in a quiet cul-de-sac in Nueva Andalucia. Conveniently located close to the casino, cafes and restaurants and walking distance to the luxury yachting marina of Puerto Banus.

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ESTEPONA

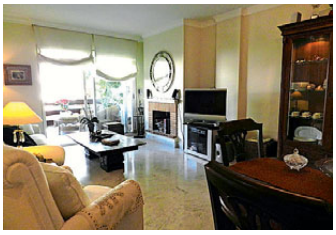
€795,000 REF: WW196

An exceptionally stylish interior designed 4 bedroom 3 bathroom villa. Beautiful internal and external features include a feature fireplace, ornate cornicing and a lily pond and waterfall. Situated only 5 minutes from the luxury yachting marina of Puerto Banus.

BENAHAVIS (ESTEPONA)

€360,000 REF: WW207

This beautiful duplex penthouse apartment is situated within a quiet, gated community just five minutes from the famous yachting marina of Puerto Banus. The spacious accommodation includes 3 double bedrooms, 3 bathrooms and a large terrace with barbecue and summer kitchen.



GUADALMINA (MARBELLA)

€220,000 REF: WW201

A bright 3 bedroom apartment situated on a beach and golf side gated complex just 300 meters from the beach and walking distance to the local shopping centre. The communal areas include a swimming pool and attractive mature gardens. An ideal holiday apartment at a very competitive price.

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St. Paul Street, Islington N1

A two bedroom house with a lovely terrace and garden

A very well presented two bedroom period house that offers light and spacious accommodation over four floors. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, double reception room, kitchen/dining room, roof terrace, garden. EPC rating D. Approximately 129 sq m (1,387 sq ft)

Freehold

Guide price: £1,395,000

(ISL140312)

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Park Place, Islington N1

A sleek contemporary townhouse within a private gated mews

Showcasing state of the art contemporary design, the property offers flexible accommodation over three floors. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, reception room, kitchen/dining area, balcony, roof terrace. EPC rating C. Approximately 136 sq m (1,458 sq ft)

Freehold

Guide price: £1,395,000

(ISL150021)

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Devonia Road, Islington N1

The heart of Angel

Beautifully refurbished apartment in the heart of Angel. The property features 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, open plan kitchen and dining area, reception room and patio garden. EPC rating D. Approximately 112 sq m (1208 sq ft)

Available part furnished

Guide price: £925 per week

(ISQ211788)

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Maldon Apartments, Islington N1

Modern residential development

A modern apartment to rent in the eagerly anticipated Folio London. The property features bedroom, bathroom, large open plan kitchen and reception room and balcony. EPC rating B. Approximately 54 sq m (582 sq ft)

Available furnished

Guide price: £445 per week

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(ISQ193127)

Hardwick Street, Islington EC1R

Superb apartment

A large apartment to rent in a modern building located a short distance from Angel Station and close to Kings Cross and Farringdon stations. The flat offers a contemporary finish throughout and has a spacious master bedroom with good storage and ensuite, large study area/second bedroom, open plan kitchen living area and a large garden. EPC rating C. Approximately 60 sq m (646 sq ft)

Available furnished

Guide price: £625 per week

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(ISQ180439)

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